Neighborhood Street Calming Program

City of Cincinnati

Department of Transportation & Engineering

City of Cincinnati
Neighborhood Street Calming Program

Table of Contents

CITY OF CINCINNATI NEIGHBORHOOD STREET CALMING PROGRAM

MISSION

The City of Cincinnati shall make every reasonable effort to improve the environment and livability of its residential neighborhoods. This effort depends in substantial part on responsible traffic management of its residential streets. If responsible traffic management does not occur, Cincinnati neighborhoods will lose their separate charms. One of the attractions of Cincinnati as a place to live and work is the unique characteristics of various neighborhoods. This quality is also attractive to incoming businesses and their employees. Without responsible traffic management, these neighborhoods can well become simply part of an impersonal regional transportation system.

The City is committed to the effective use of a Neighborhood Street Calming Program (NSCP) that will be administered through a cooperative effort of City government and the citizens of the City. Their efforts will be to provide safe, sensitive and effective solutions to documented problems or deficiencies in the neighborhood street system without creating an adverse impact on the surrounding areas and Through Street System.

I. INTRODUCTION

Cincinnati places a high value on neighborhood livability, as reflected in these policies. Although no one can precisely define livability, it certainly encompasses some of the following characteristics:

- The right of all residents to feel safe in their neighborhoods.
- The opportunity to interact with one's neighbors without distractions from traffic or threats from passing vehicles.
- The opportunity to experience a sense of home and privacy.
- A sense of community and neighborhood identity and pride.

II. OBJECTIVES OF NSCP

Use of funds relative to street calming shall:

- Improve neighborhoods' livability by mitigating the impact of vehicular traffic on residential neighborhoods.
- Promote safe and pleasant conditions for residents, pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists on neighborhood streets.
- Encourage citizen involvement in neighborhood traffic management activities.
- Make efficient uses of City resources by assigning priorities with diversity, balance and need as criteria.

III. POLICIES

The following policies are established as part of the Neighborhood Street Calming Program (NSCP) for residential streets:

- Application of this program shall be limited to residential streets, not on the Through Street List, with less than 3000 vpd, except as arterial treatments contribute to improvement of these conditions.

- Normally, through traffic should be routed on those streets contained on the City's Through Street List.

- Emergency vehicle access shall be preserved.

- The City shall employ practices and devices to achieve the NSCP's objectives. Traffic management devices include traffic circles, speed humps, diverters, median, curb extensions and others. These policies may induce donation of property or require acquisition of property where appropriate. These devices will also include consideration of the livability of the neighborhoods affected and as stated above.

To implement the NSCP's policies, City officials will:

- Seek active citizen participation through communication with the citizenry and appropriate groups;

- Inform Council and the City Planning Commission as required for their review of NSCP calming plans, which are desired by the majority of the affected residents, or which represent major implementation of the NSCP's vision and plan statement;

- Follow applicable codes and guidelines and;

- Make publicized and reasonable tests before installation, when needed.

IV. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET CALMING IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

A. Project Request

- Receive requests from citizen, community group, or petition from residents of a particular street.

- These requests will be responded to immediately with a copy of the Neighborhood Street Calming Program (NSCP) booklet, and a valid majority petition to study the street will be requested (if one was not originally supplied). The name and phone number of a contact person (who will generally be responsible for circulating petitions) will also be requested. The response will include a sample petition (Appendix 3), and suggest a speed watch when speeding is cited as a problem.

- If a preliminary review shows that a hazard exists that must be immediately addressed, the City may take necessary action without following these steps.

B. Petition to Study & Preliminary Analysis

- The petition must be signed by 50 percent of the residences on the affected street. Only one signature per residence will be accepted.

- Upon receipt of a valid petition to study the street, and verification that the affected Community Council has had an opportunity to comment on the request for study, City staff from the Traffic Engineering Division will conduct an analysis of accidents, speed, and traffic volumes. City staff will report the results of this study to the contact person and affected Community Council.

C. Correctable Condition Exists

- If a correctable condition exists, the staff will consider various traffic management devices. Consideration of business impacts will also be considered as well as identification of non-owner-occupied type housing such as multi-family dwellings and apartment buildings. The most appropriate traffic management technique will then be the subject of a post card survey to all directly affected residences. A public meeting may be held, if deemed appropriate by the City, Community Council or residents.

- If a street closure is recommended, approval through the official Street Closure Process will be required.

- A valid post card survey response is achieved when 60 percent of post cards are returned, with 70 percent of those in favor of the traffic management technique.

- Failure to achieve sufficient support from the post card survey for a specific technique will normally result in an informal letter to the contact person and offer to meet with the affected groups to discuss the next course of action. This course of

action would normally involve an additional post card survey after any alternate proposal is selected.

- If a successful post card survey is received, the staff will prepare a final report for City Council, affected groups, and City Planning Commission if necessary.

- Upon approval and acceptance of this report, the project will be placed on the priority list for installation.

- Priorities for implementation, funding and action shall be determined by using the input of the criteria developed on pages 10 and 11.

D. <u>Corrective Condition Is Not Verified</u>

- The City staff will submit a response to the contact person and community group that will describe the analysis performed and that no action is recommended at this time. Speed watch will be suggested if it was not used initially or could continue as desired by the petitioners.

V. PUBLIC PROCESS FOR PARTICIPATION IN NEIGHBORHOOD STREET CALMING PROGRAM

1. Citizen and/or community group submits request through written correspondence, phone, or e-mail.

2. City staff sends NSCP booklet with cover letter, and requests a petition (50 percent) from residences (housing units) on this affected street.

3. Citizen(s) notifies their affected community group and gathers signatures for a petition and returns to City staff.

4. City staff verifies the petition, notifies citizen, and coordinates traffic studies (speed, accidents, volume).

5. City staff notifies the Fire Department for their input into potential changes on the affected streets.

6. City staff analyzes data, prioritizes street citywide, and notifies citizen and Community Council.

7. City staff consults with the citizen and the affected Community Council to receive their input on the selected traffic calming and to receive approval.

8. City staff prepares post card survey and sends to directly affected residents (may include other adjoining/intersecting streets).

9. City staff receives post cards (at least 60 percent return) and verifies for consensus (70 percent) of those post cards returned.

10. City staff notifies the affected community group first and then the residents through written correspondence with survey results.

11. City staff prepares written report to City Council.

12. Council approves report.

13. Depending on technique chosen, City staff meets with citizen, recommends locations, and required signature agreement from abutting property owner(s) to the technique chosen.

14. City staff receives signed agreement(s) as needed, and schedules implementation with either city forces or private contractors.

15. After implementation and a one-year period, post street calming traffic studies are conducted to determine effectiveness.

NOTE: Process can be stopped for a variety of reasons along the 15-step path.

- Step #4 - not a qualified 50 percent majority petition
- Step #6 - street does not rate high enough among other City streets
- Step #7 - residents cannot agree among themselves for technique
- Step #7 - Fire and Police Departments or community council rejects proposal for access concerns, emergency response time, etc.
- Step #9 - not a 60 percent return or a qualified 70 percent majority vote
- Step #10 - community group objects
- Step #12 - City Council does not approve report
- Step #13 - agreements not signed by property owners
- Step #14 - funding sources depleted

VI. PRIORITY POINT SYSTEM

The following information is used to develop a numerical score for each NSCP project request. Scores are used to rank requests on a citywide basis. A high-ranking, available budget, cost effectiveness and other factors are used to determine which projects will proceed to the implementation stage.

A. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

This includes community input, impact of the proposal on the neighborhood, fire response times, and access to streets by fire apparatus, impacts to the elderly or disabled, and effects on:

- Traffic circulation
- Parking in congested neighborhoods
- Adjacent land use, green space, and street trees
- Neighboring properties and businesses

The current economic viability and future potential of the neighborhood and adjacent area, and other factors identified to be considered to be affected by the neighbors, affected groups, and/or City staff must also be considered. This will include successful integration with community plans and must take into account effects on citywide plans.

20 points maximum score

B. TRAFFIC VOLUME

Average daily volume (on the segment of the project street having the highest volume), divided by 150.

20 points maximum score

C. SPEED

Percent of vehicles over the speed limit +5 mph (on the segment of the project street having the highest percentage over the limit), divided by 3.

30 points maximum score

D. ACCIDENTS

Accidents over three consecutive years, considering number, type, and severity relative to streets of similar character.

20 points maximum score

E. ELEMENTARY AND JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Five points for each private or public elementary school on the subject street, or within one-half mile of the subject street.

F. OTHER PEDESTRIAN AREAS

Up to five points for each individual pedestrian-oriented facility, such as elderly housing or a park on the subject street, or within one-half mile of the subject street. For pedestrian-oriented facilities grouped together on the subject street, up to five points for the group.

10 points maximum score

G. BICYCLE ROUTES

Five points for a subject street designated as a bicycle route in the City of Cincinnati's bicycle system.

The priority list will be revised once per month or as needed to allow the inclusion of new projects and the removal of those projects that have been completed. Additionally, projects that have been on the list for three or more years will be reviewed by the City staff to determine if they should remain on the list, be updated, or dropped from consideration. The contact person for the project will be notified of the project status after the review is completed. If a project is dropped, the neighborhood will be able to reenter the program with a revised project request if they so desire.

VII. FUNDING PROCEDURES

The NSCP recognizes that there are budget constraints for all requests. Nevertheless, neighborhood calming is a critical citywide concern. To implement the policies of this Program, there are several methods of funding:

A. City Council has allocated general capital fund dollars to the NSCP in the 2008 Approved Budget Update.

B. NSCP recognizes that neighborhoods that benefit from the City's general capital fund may have a role in maintaining and caring for the benefits provided.

APPENDIX 1

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

1. SPEED WATCH

A speed watch program monitors vehicle speeds through a cooperative effort of residents, police officials, and traffic engineers. This program also provides feedback to those who own or drive vehicles and speed through residential neighborhoods without going so far as to issue citations. The residents are trained on the use of a radar gun. They record vehicle speeds and license plate numbers of passing cars that exceed the posted limit. This information is then analyzed by traffic engineers and provided to the police for the distribution of letters that request respect for the resident's concerns for safety, livability and reduced traffic speeds in their neighborhood.

2. SPEED ENFORCEMENT

Information collected by speed watch programs, engineering studies, citizen referrals, and historical police records provide the basis for targeted intensive police enforcement. Although it is impractical to provide round the clock enforcement at this time, the City will continue to intensify enforcement where correctable speeding problems occur.

3. SPEED HUMPS

Speed humps are gradual changes in the roadway surface usually 22 feet long and 3 inches high. These humps differ dramatically from speed bumps that were traditionally installed on private property. Speed bumps tend to jolt a vehicle and can cause damage or loss of control if taken at excessive speed. Speed humps have little effect on a vehicle driving the speed limit, but produce discomfort when the speed limit is exceeded. Speed humps are generally placed approximately 300 feet apart and require signage in each direction that warns the driver to slow down. Speed humps have shown promise nationally in reducing speed while not creating hazards to emergency response vehicles.

APPENDIX 1

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

4. TRAFFIC CIRCLES

Traffic circles are raised concrete or landscaped islands that are placed in the center of an intersection. They require that vehicles change course while proceeding through an intersection and this generally results in a speed reduction. Intersections containing traffic circles must have adequate street lighting and signage to provide advance visibility and warning for the required change of course.

5. CHOKERS, BUMP OUTS, OR CURB EXTENSIONS

These devices narrow the pavement by widening the sidewalk area at strategic locations. They provide shorter pedestrian crossing distances and provide protection to the beginning of a parking lane. The driver also senses the roadway narrowing when approaching one of these devices, which can result in speed reduction and a sense that the driver is entering a residential area.

6. SEMI-DIVERTERS

These devices limit access to a street from one direction by blocking half of the street. They may also be constructed to limit certain movements at an intersection. Semi-diverters are generally effective in reducing traffic in the direction they block but are still able to allow emergency access.

7. DIAGONAL DIVERTERS

These devices place a barrier diagonally across in intersection which results in the elimination of through movements and turning conflicts. The resulting intersection resembles two back-to-back curves. Diagonal diverters reduce traffic while still allowing access and circulation through the neighborhood.

APPENDIX 1

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

8. STAR DIVERTERS

These devices are raised concrete or landscaped islands in the center of an intersection, which eliminate through movements and turning conflicts by forcing all approaching vehicles to make right turns. Star diverters reduce traffic while still allowing excess circulation through this neighborhood.

9. MEDIAN BARRIER (INTERSECTION CHANNELIZATION)

These devices are designed to eliminate certain movements by construction concrete or landscaped islands at strategic locations. Left turns are no longer possible when these items are placed down the center of a road. Installation of these devices results in a reduction in traffic, as certain movements are no longer possible.

10. CUL-DE-SACS

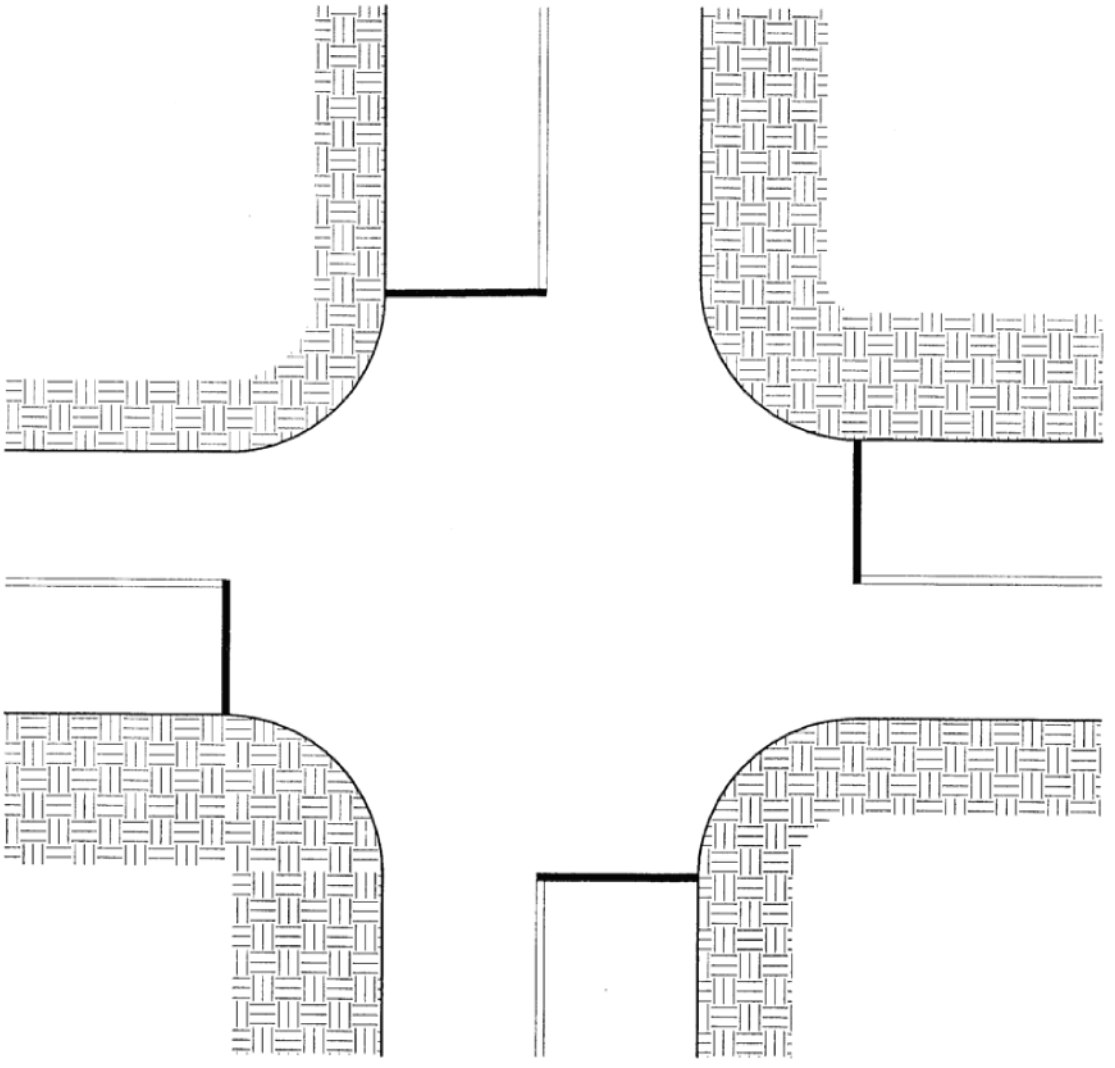
These devices are complete closures of the street either by midblock or at an intersection. They are intended to completely block access from one end of a local street. By doing so, major reductions in speed and volume results. However, these reductions can result in increases on adjacent parallel streets and therefore must be very carefully considered. A cul-de-sac installed on a street may create problems for emergency vehicle access. This problem can usually be overcome if an adequate turnaround is provided where the street is closed. Any request to close a street must follow the City's Street Closure Process as approved by City Council.

11. PROHIBITIVE SIGNAGE

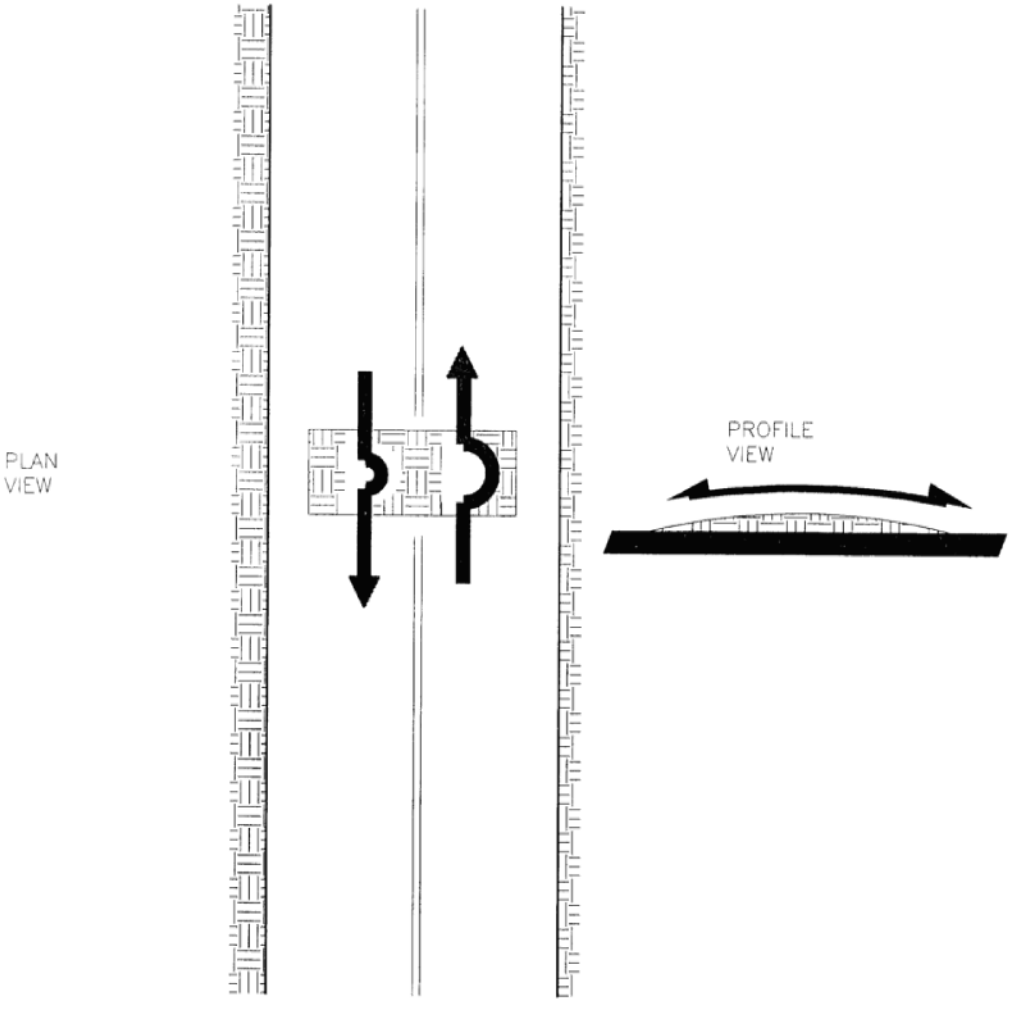
These devices include one-way signs, turn restriction signs, truck prohibition signs, etc. Their installation results in the elimination of certain traffic movements while still maintaining access for emergencies or for all vehicles at selected times of the day. They can be effective in reducing traffic and do not require the higher costs associated with the construction of concrete barriers and diverters. Stop signs are generally not installed to divert traffic or reduce speeding. National studies have shown that the use of stop signs for this purpose generally does not result in speed reduction along the entire length of the street. Additionally, when installed to reduce speeding along these signs tend to be violated regularly and increase the potential for rear end accidents.

APPENDIX 2

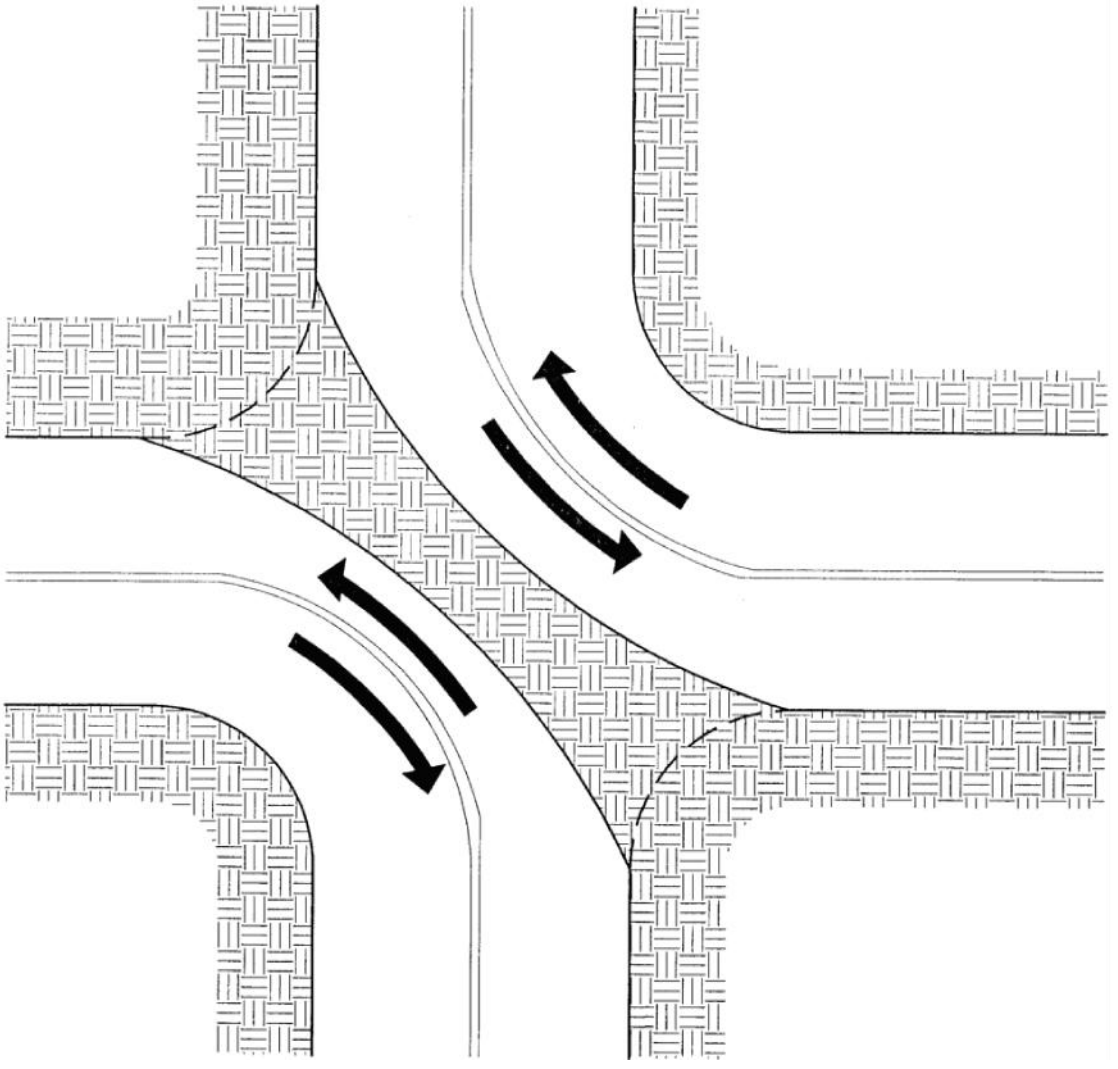
TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DEVICE : TYPICAL INTERSECTION



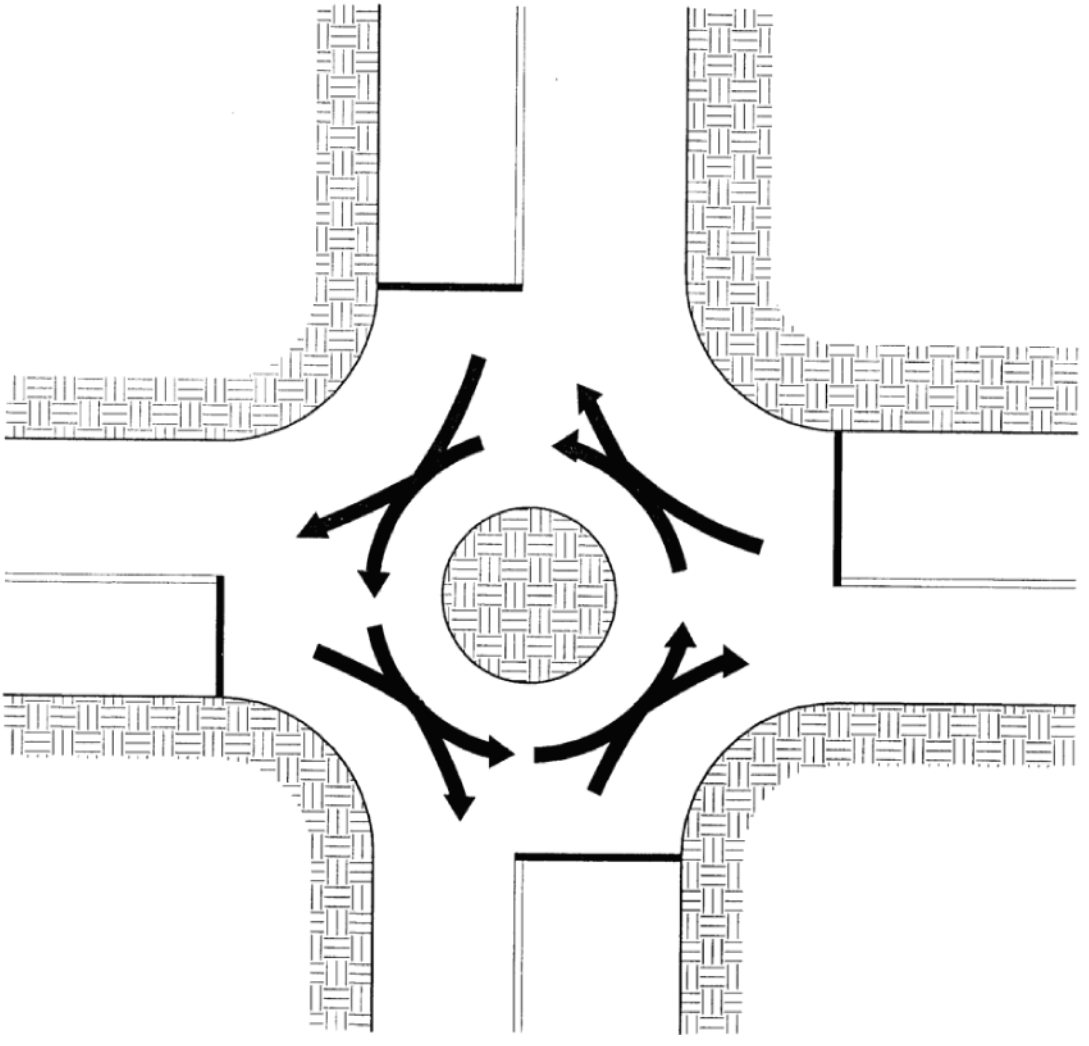
TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DEVICE : SPEED HUMP (#3)



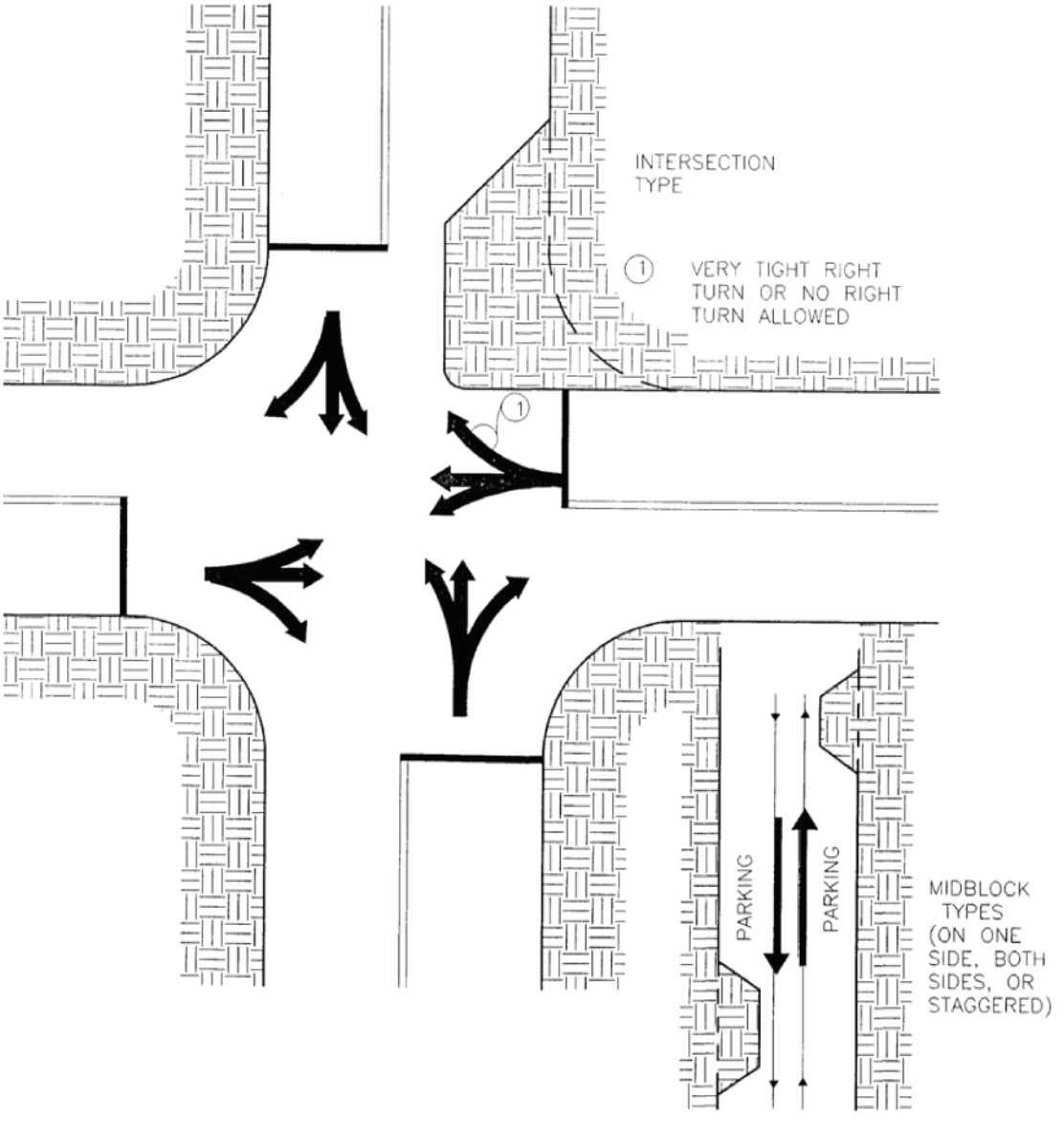
TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DEVICE : DIAGONAL DIVERTER (#7)



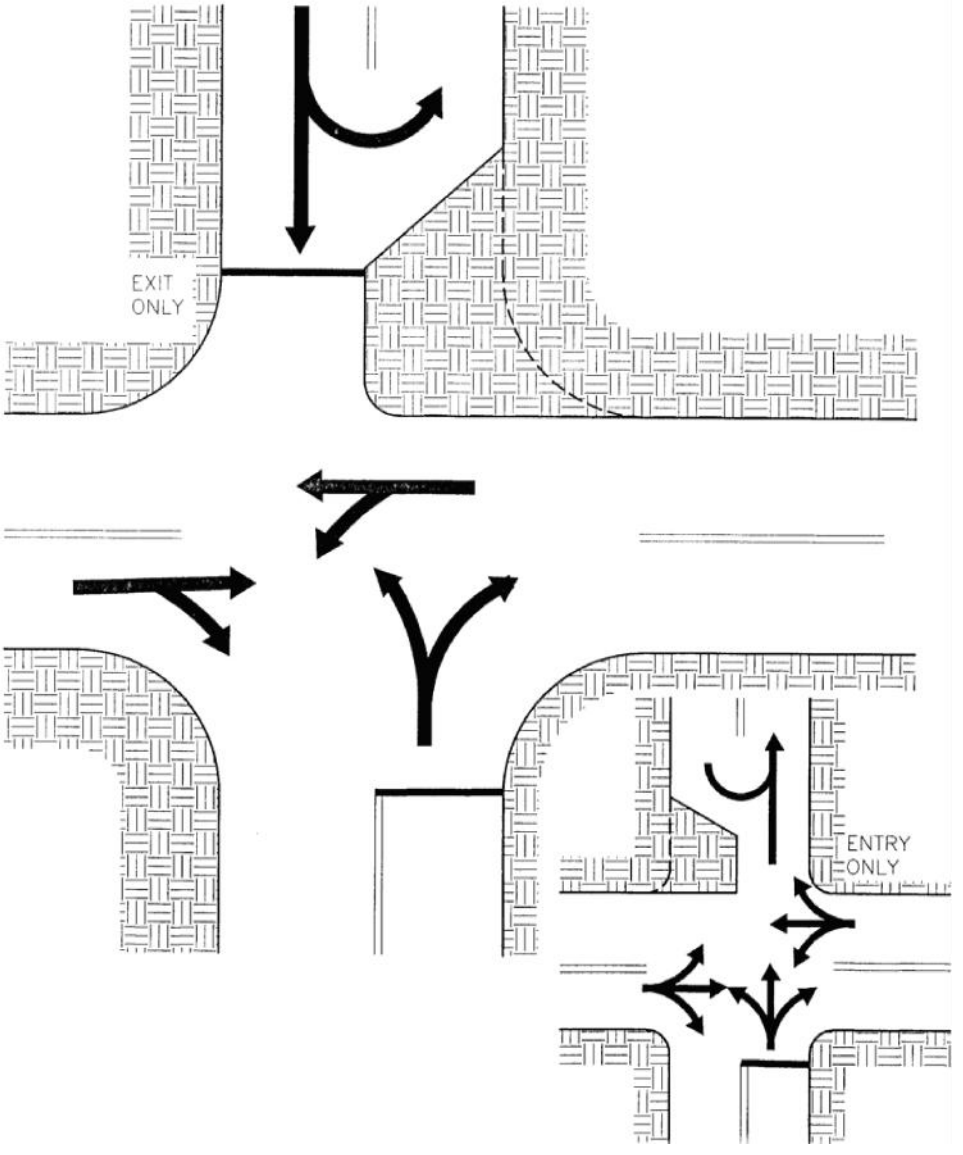
TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DEVICE : TRAFFIC CIRCLE, (#4)



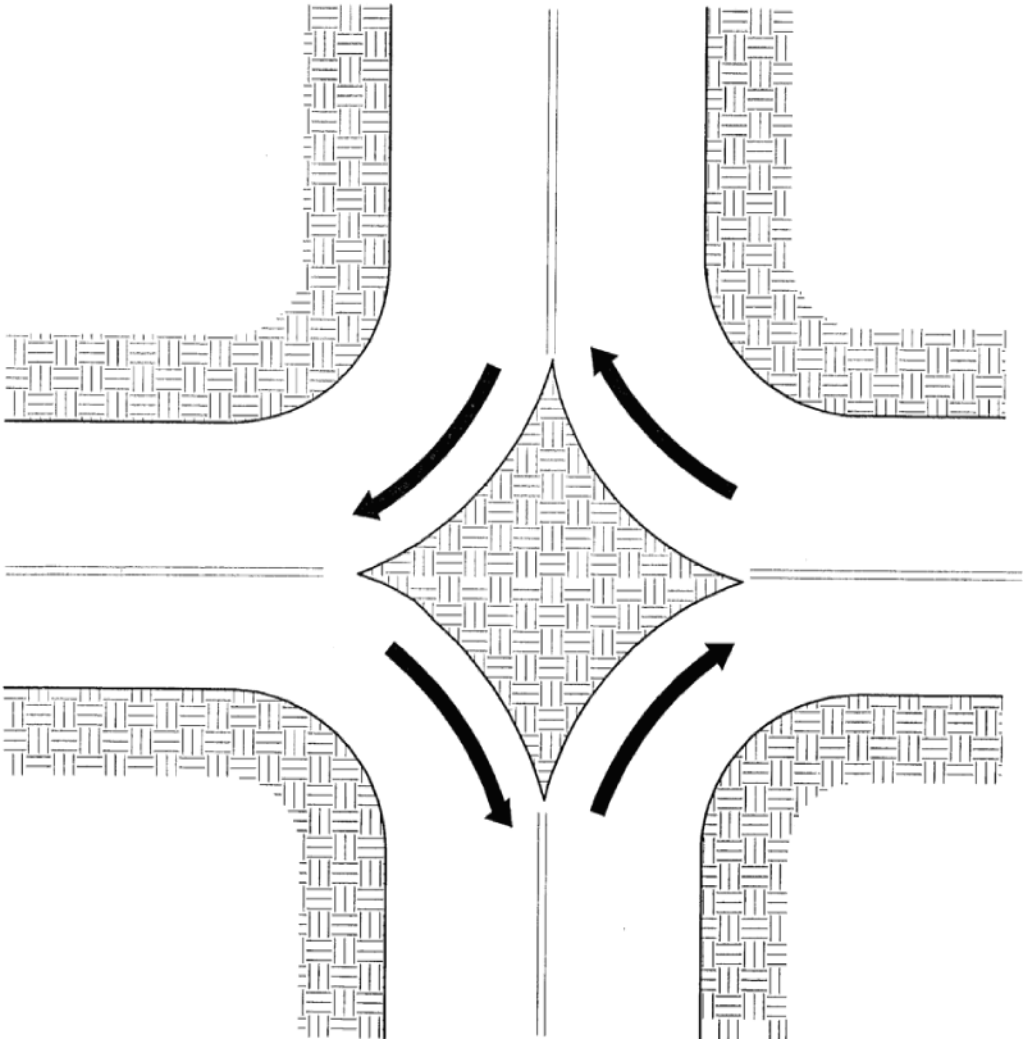
TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DEVICE : CHOKERS, CURB EXTENSIONS, OR BUMP-OUTS (#5)



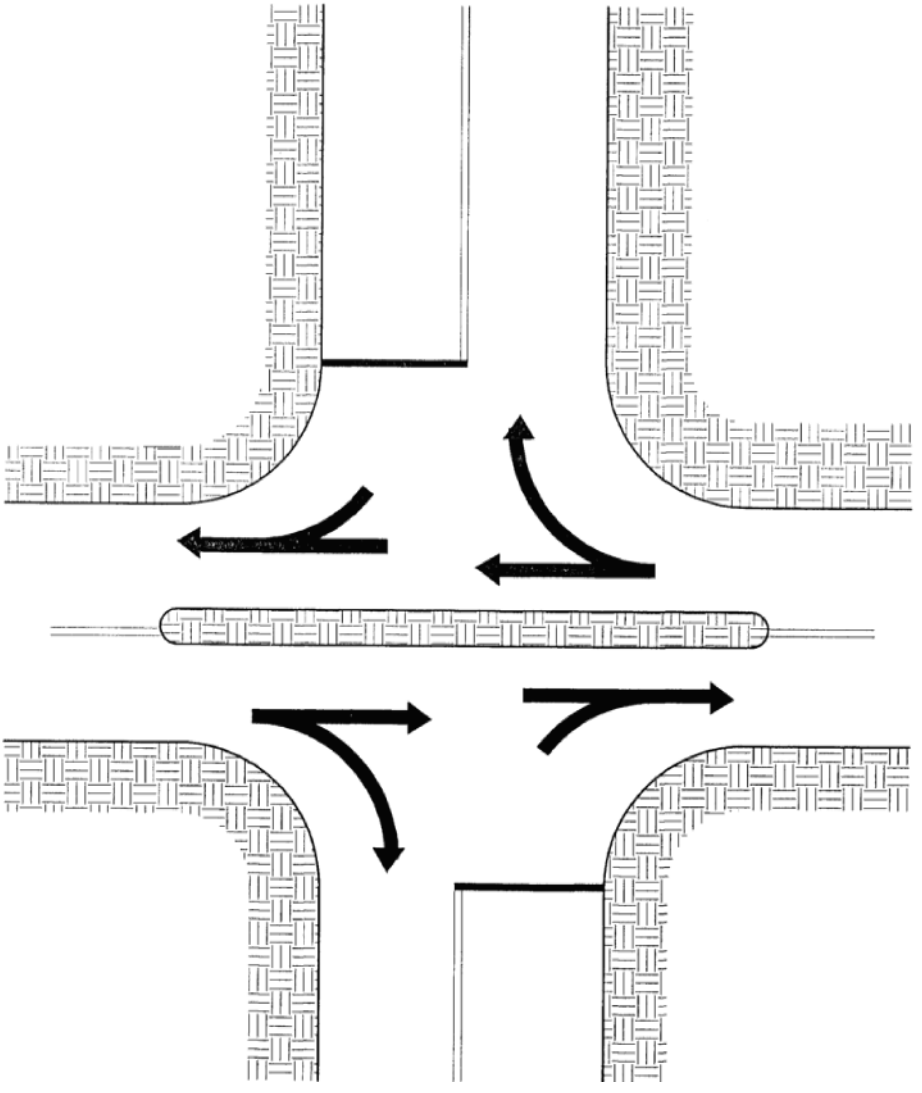
TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DEVICE : SEMI-DIVERTER (#6)



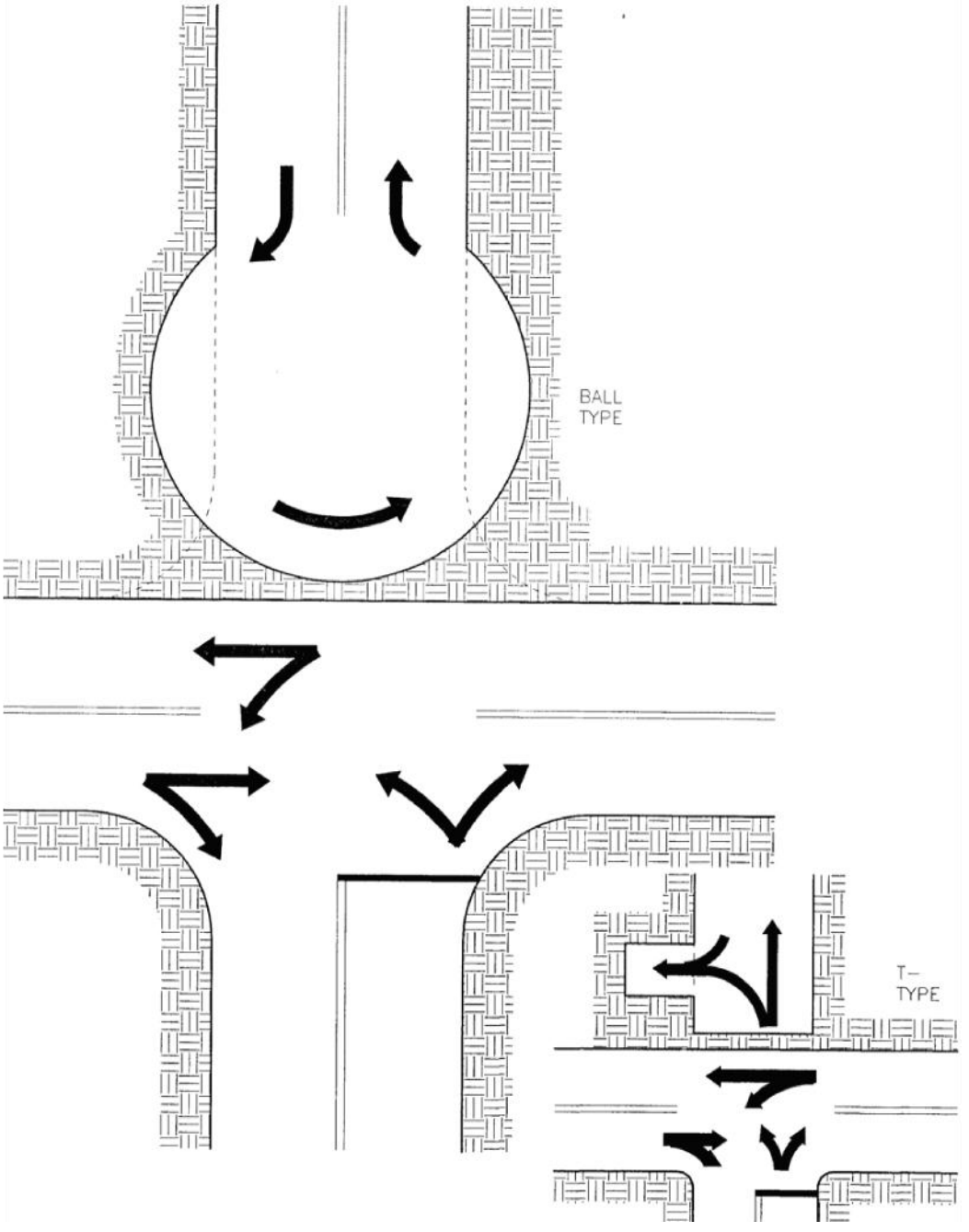
TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DEVICE : STAR DIVERTER (#8)



TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DEVICE : MEDIAN BARRIER
(INTERSECTION CHANNELIZATION) (#9)



TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DEVICE : CUL-DE-SAC (#10)



APPENDIX 3

STUDY PETITION

Division of Traffic Engineering
City Hall, Suite 320
801 Plum Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

We, the undersigned are residents of _____
from _____ to _____.
We are concerned about the traffic on our street. We submit this Petition to the City of Cincinnati for active consideration under the Neighborhood Street Calming Program. The _____ (Representative Civic Association or Community Council) was notified of this Petition on _____. We petition the City for _____.

We understand that the City will, upon receipt of a valid majority petition, analyze relevant conditions to determine the impact of the proposed action. The City must reserve the right to overrule the petition if there are extenuating circumstances detrimental to public safety, traffic operations, and/or neighborhood interests.

PETITION CIRCULATOR -SIGNATURE:	**ADDRESS/PHONE:**
_____	_____
SIGNATURE:	**ADDRESS/PHONE:**
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
SIGNATURE:	**ADDRESS/PHONE:**

APPENDIX 4

SPEED WATCH PROGRAM

Instructions:

1. Complete names, addresses, and phone numbers of all participating residents (pg. 1).

2. Complete location, day, date, and times of radar surveillance (pg. 2). For locations, be as specific as possible using house numbers and nearest intersecting streets (ex. Park Ave., #2501 -#2599 between Maple and Oak).

3. Count ***all*** vehicles clocked by radar (pg. 2).

4. For those vehicle exceeding the speed limit by ***more than*** 5 mph, record the complete license plate number, speed, and time (pg. 2). Use additional sheets for each different location and/or day.

5. When finished, return the radar unit and the Speed Watch Program sheets as soon as possible to the Traffic Engineering Division. There is a maximum three (3) consecutive day usage of the radar unit.

Participants:

NAME:	**ADDRESS:**	**PHONE NO.**
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

The following are some guidelines for the collection of Speed Watch Data:

The information you collect on speeding vehicles is used to send warning letters to the owners of vehicles exceeding the speed limit. It is therefore extremely important to be as accurate as possible when recording license plate numbers and vehicle/driver descriptions. When errors occur, it causes many hard feelings and reduces support for and the effectiveness of the Speed Watch Program. We recommend using at least three persons for each speed watch session, one each to operate the speed gun, spot vehicle/driver descriptions and record data. The use of binoculars for observers is recommended.

Collected data that does not contain vehicle and driver description cannot be used. These are important as a cross check on proper identification of vehicles and when the registered owners question the Police Division concerning the letter they receive.

Letters are sent out within one week of each speed watch. To provide the City time to obtain vehicle registration information, process and mail the letters, all Speed Watch data should be turned in within three days. Therefore, data collected on Fridays (along with any other weekend data) should be delivered or faxed to the Division of Traffic Engineering on the following Monday. We cannot accept data more than three days old. Our address and fax number is:

Division of Traffic Engineering
City Hall, Room 320
801 Plum Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
Fax: (513) 352-5318

RADAR SURVEILLANCE

DATE: _____ LOCATION: _____

TIME	SPEED	LICENSE #	VEHICLE DESCRIPTION*	DRIVER DESCRIPTION*

* E.G. Blue Ford 4 dr.; White pickup truck (the more information the better; e.g. if truck has a logo on it, what is it).

** E.G. Older white male; young female black, etc.

APPENDIX 5

NEIGHBORHOOD STREET CALMING PRIORITY POINT RANKING

STREET: _____ **FROM:** _____ **TO:**_____

STAFF NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____

CATEGORY		**POINTS**
A.	Community Development Issues (20 points max.)	_____
B.	Traffic Volume (20 points max.)	_____
C.	Speed (30 points max.)	_____
D.	Accidents (20 points max.)	_____
E.	Schools (5 points for each)	_____
F.	Pedestrian Areas (5 points for each)	_____
G.	Designated Bicycle Routes (5 points)	_____
TOTAL POINTS		_____